# The Early Bird

observed the second officer. ingenooity o' that feller at the winch. And here we are, beachcombers, in Ba- He couldn't 'a' done that with his nor-

dodged and clamored. "Arrea!" they orphans' home, and-finish!" shouted, peering overside into the ful of brown gunny bags swung inboard with a rush, poised over the black yawn of the hatch, twirled and suddenly dropped out of sight, to the hollow iron music of the winch and a

The winch boy-an odd little aged Chinaman in a pastoral straw bonnet, with a sheath knife sticking out, like his blue dungaree—had hardly exerted a muscle; instead of the fuming, sweating tug which a white man gives the lever, he had laid on a calm hand and with rope yarn at the proper point, swung below; and a "Hylam" coolie had scored one mechanical triumph over a Glasgow firm.

"Now that's ingenooity," said the second. He paused to kick at Bengall boxwallah down the ladder, and fol-lowed to cut the sampan loose. Shrieks of protest-"Oh, zoolum!-Zubberdust!" rose and drifted astern over the glaring harbor. The second remounted, mopping sweat from under his pith helmet, and muttering-"black swine, chafing all the paint off my stan-"Ingenooity," resumed. "That's what

This he elaborated after tiffin, in Mac's cabin against the silent engines. We all smoked Mrs. Middleton's cheroots, scratched prickly heat, and cursed Chittagong.

'But American ingenooity's the most ingenious," he declared, patrioticially. "What? Oh, Scots be hanged. Hoot, toot. Mean by it? Definition? Why, sure. I mean-er-that quality which er-which promotes the general happiness with the least fuss to all con-There you are. Now let me knocked about in oil ships a spell and jungle. fought some in the Philapeens, and 'fore that prospected considerable in Colorado and China and all over. Well,

a crowd of us boys was sent up into Sumatra by some Dutchmen-Padang highlands, and way up in from Fort de Kock. We found some gold and lots o' dengue fever. But the Dutchmen naturally didn't pay us as per contract, and we got back to Batavia with something over 500 guilders between four of us, for all our wordly goods. We put up at the best hotel, and fig-ured how long it would last.

We ought to moved out quick, but

after the bosque things was so interesting in that little Dutch burg that we kept staying on. Seemed like a metropolis. And presently, what with circuses, and biographs, and mylords, and Duck-and-Dorises, and-and entertainments, we found that a conservative estimate left us 354 guilders in debt the next boat sailed. Chinese boat and deck passage at that Twan't altogether our fauit. We'd hadn't come over to investigate Budtraveled in a yacht, a converted hooker that was improved some. He with a push o' courtiers and fifty-two wives, a full pack and him the little knickerbockers, fifty-two of 'em; an

No prospect c' more money, or even The consul's one o' the whitest men in the east, and helped us a whole lot, but he didn't hold out any rosy delusions o' grandeur much more

Finally, I remember, we all sat up late one night, loafing round in sarongs in the ground floor verandas and listening to tree lizards a-calling "Tokay, To-kay!" the way they do. It makes you thirsty if you like sweet wines. Well, about midnight we'd exhausted ever project and were knocking each other a good deal. All the king's wives had disappeared long ago, upstairs, and everything was dull and we were peevish

"I see a way o' financing ourselves, I think," says Sam Bird. "Perhaps." He was a big California boy, talked slow and lazy, a farmer-looking boy, but one of the best. "Don't go knocking this way. Wait till tomorrow or next day.

"Just what we been doing," snaps out Bassett. "Tomorrer, and tomorrer, and tomorrer, shifts into the lean and slippered pantaloon." (Bassett came from the Uni of Indiana or somewhere, and he knew Shakespeare by the back-little chap, big spectacles, thin face and a nose as pointed as a lead pencil-one more whittle and the point'd break; a little sharp nose and a little sharp voice through it-No! Not Shakespeare: Bassett!) "That's what you lazy Pacific slopers are always saying," he tells Sam. "Tomorrer, manana, besok-bad as these goo-goos." I knew what Bird's game was. thought, and said so.

'You're trying to sell those snakeskins to those two French epidermist That's the line. Wealthy: eccentric." | chievous kind o' look. men in Noordwijk. Saw you pervadthat in our crisis?"

"Don't you go figuring on any flirta-

skins that wouldn't realize our fares He took off the undershirt with the learned it \* \* two days!" Like that. spendthrifts. to Tandjong Priok in a bullock cart, coal-tar front, threw it under the ban- All the rest was drowned, except when "We spent it all right," gloated the let alone a sado. Bassett got real bit- yan, and buttoned up his jacket. Then he bumped his nose against my ear and second.

a Sumatra wrapper," says Bassett, let- awsked you, dear boy." And he climbed Two blocks this side he slowed down, east." ting on not to hear, "and settled down into the car.

On a white-hot deck the coolies the Dutch'll give our effects to their say he is! I know better. He's by the

bumping lorcha. The chain ran down enough to want 'em," says Bird; "and when the horn bellowed like an Ausrattling, fill they signaled the winch to stop, with yellow hands waving abstractedly, and a wail of "Abis!" pass very low remarks, and got to be down our way, laying a trail o' this Grunts and thuds rose out of the loreha in earnest; and when Dan Towers, axle grease stuff all along the footin a thin but pungent cloud of dust; who'd been homesick for some time, path. Honk-onk-onk, goes the horn, then the watchers at the rail cried said he'd never see Ashtabula, O., and the rattle was like a steam roller which again, and Bird said there was always chain clanked taut, and a giant sling-compensations, we nearly had a fight; ful of brown gunny bags swung in-compensations, we nearly had a fight; ful of brown gunny bags swung in-compensations, we nearly had a fight; ful of brown gunny bags swung in-compensations and should be sho Ain't it a funny world?

suddenly dropped out of sight, to the held blue, in those small marble sepul-hollow iron music of the winch and a chre Turkish bath bedrooms, about 2 polyglot scream of "Kubberdar—arrea in the morning. Before daybreak I phant suffering same way. There round in Sam Bird's room next door, tevreden. It was a pretty race, and and we all knew it; only certain thing and then saw his kimono flapping when Sam, without slowing engines, in the whole transaction. So at 11:30, 'cross the compound on his way back dodged the pet orang-utan (who'd come with one tremendous shrug, it closed at a rudimentary tail stump, from under from the bath. I sung out, "Go to bed, out into the road from behind the bath Sam's price. He paid down the skins idiot!" and rolled over to sleep.

> running wild in the hotel yard. I the windows of the royal suite. down the veranda, like horses looking distant honks affoating off past the though, and the situation." Close-out o' their stalls. And there under the Harmonie club. big banyan tree, puffing and churning and emitting smoke, was a ridiculous table we had nothing to say except our ese courtier out with him, and that

When the sleep cleared out o' my yes I saw it was Sam Bird.

"He's gone off his head," says he. 'Heat's been too much for him, your talk. What's the game?" 'hought he acted queer last night." We all yelled together: "What you

up to? "She'll run all right," sings out Bird. To prove it, she backed through a wire fence into the banyan roots and gave up with a snort. Sam took a monkey wrench and a spanner out of his pocket, pulled off his coat, and disapalk." And there is the second story: ket, pulled off his coat, and disap-Before I was in steam this way, I peared under the body there in the

We three ran out in our pajamas-

"See the at nightfall, under the bamboo tree, chairs. "Notice him throw me around? tavia; and we'll starve to death, and mal strength. Go on yourself, Dan! I

BY HENRY M. RIDEOUT.

nut-heat and fever and worry.' "No orphan would be grasping All of a sudden we thought so, too, cause Dan really liked Ashtabula, compound full speed, slewing the corners, and doing a Judgment day on the their shoulders just to show they didn't Well, we all got sore, and went to trumpet. You know the noise a fat care, when they did.

stuck hy head outdoors—out popped all the others'. Bassett's sharp beak, and old Dan's big frowzly nut and a long and went boiling down the avenue "Lying in an open-face go-down didn't line o' bullet headed Dutch planters all again, out the gate, and we could hear do her a bit o' good. I studied her,

little red motor car. First one we'd friend was a wealthy and eccentric afternoon was teaching him to steer, ever seen in the east. A six-footer in young man, with a passion for taking while Dan Towers and Bassett sat bitwhite and a topi bigger'n the machine out his motor car in the early morn- terly computing how much this specitself sat at the wheel jerking on them ing. The manager had quieted down; tacle cost us per day. I didn't tell 'em tell-tale-handle things and writhing apparently no complaints issued by she belonged to us; it saved trouble. royalty.

he left the car under the tree and yan, mastheaded till after dark. The Bassett was always quick at sizing came and had coffee in our veranda, third day Sam didn't climb in at all, acting like himself again almost.

"How much cash have we got?" asks

Frenchmen came out o' their shopcivilized-looking fellers they and Sam and they all began to talk Malay at once. They laid it out how chupput she could lari a kilometre, and Sam didn't know how long a kilometre was, and when they tried to explain it in Malay it was worse than before And Sam had to coin terms like "monkey-wrench-pooniah" to express his feelings toward the health o' her interior. By 11 o'clock they came down to fifteen hundred guilders.

Bird stood firm and stern for twelve hundred "Easy, Sam," I says. "I followed you blind so far, but I don't like this.

Where's the one thousand?' "Shut up," he says; then translates to the Frenchman. "My friend is right. They weakened a little, shrugging

Those reptiles may have turned the woke a little and heard a thrashing wasn't a piece o' silence left in Wel- balance, for they really were all right. house suddenly), why, all the Dutch- and the 200 guilders, promised the rest Along dawn I woke again, and this men laughed, and so did the Javanese that afternoon, and we started back in ing tug which a white man gives the lever, he had laid on a calm hand and done the trick. Two bricks, lashed horns tooting like the steam tram was so surprised. Heads began to show in mering, off she limped again.

mouthed chap, Sam was.

Next day the same lessons went on, When he came back, about 9 o'clock, and the orang-utan took to the banbut the young Siamese did, and an old-"Now, then," says Bassett, "make er man in pale pink and green silks and a London helmet, and a servant up



He was on his back under the ma- ing to lose. Give it here." dhist ruins and paddy growing. He was chine, wrenching and pounding, and "What for?" we asked him. "Buying hot on modern improvements then; wouldn't say a word. You wouldn't be- dog carts, or going to Tosari for your lieve the smell o' that cheap petrol health?" stopped at the same hotel, o' course, little tin French machine, crazy and good." falling apart with old age, but I could joker. Everything blossomed out gay like binnacles. Even kicking Sam's 'a' been arrested over that, or asked to at once—one long state feast. O' course legs didn't make him come out till he pay our bill—same thing." finished. When he did his undershirt

> "She'll run!" he said, as if we'd been waiting weeks to hear that fact. "Look here, you Native Son o' the vertising what?" Golden West," squeaks Bassett, very sharp, "explain yourself. What thing are you doing?"

"Looks like an otta-mobile, don't it?"

He began tinkering some more, and and shook his fist under Sam's nose, fighting mad.

his bedroom window in a towel.

"There," he said. After tinkering a while more, he explained to me and -that young grafter.' Dan. "If you must know, I'm just takocautiful dawn! Fresh and mild, and his coffee and toast, looking mournful you please. the little dickey birds a-warbling their and sheepish.

spin in his car this way." peak kind, "whose is this obscene bun- ry, boys."

le o' scrap-iron?" He became sensible all at once. any asks, don't forget it's mine. I'm it?' wealthy and eccentric young man.

"What!" squeals Bassett, bursting ing round there. They ain't fools, out through the vines. "Hiring? by the and both went up in the air again. I Neither are we. You'll get twenty day? Boys," he turns to us, fairly had to separate all three of 'em, and guilders-if you have luck. What's crying, "it's our money, our funds, that lock up Bassett in his room 'cause he he laughed, and threw the paper on this-this-vampire eats up and throws insisted on locking Sam Bird up. ns, was all I said," drawls this away, so's he can come wake us up Sam Bird. "Don't get hot." And he 'fore daylight out of our warm beds-I "Come along. Oh, and bring those leans back and smokes his Palacombo, mean cool beds." He took on fierce till snakeskins.'

ous to keep from hearing us. tion motifs with the forty-second say that the gentleman must make funds. queen," says Bassett, following his some quiet at once, or they might dis- For the first time then I found how York.

he put on English and a duke's drawl.
"I begin to wish you'd left me behind to Bencoolen," he says.
"So do I," agrees Sam Bird, prompt for a spin in my caw. If you were hind the put on English and a duke's drawl.
"I begin to wish you'd left me behind to English and a duke's drawl.
"No feah," says he, talking loud all right!" And another time—"she'll hold together a full week, sure!" All you'd do."
"God help any man," said this old hearty. "I'd 'a' married a nice native girl in like such a perfect rotter, I might have left through Noordwijk.

in a nice little campong; plenty of rice, "It's the heat's done it," says Bas- to the taxidermatists' door. The two (Copyright.)

nice cool morning, all the birds just | Bird. "Two hundred guilders. Bueno: have cleared out and been all right, beginning to chirp up in the canary live always argued, if the king of Siam hadn't come over to investigate Rud-

stuff if you'd undergone it. She was a "No," he says. "For the general

"What was this loco act of yours at see she'd been scrubbed and polished daylight?" says Bassett. "We might

"Oh, that," drawls Sam. "That was interesting sight, a floating round and and he was red as apoplexy, but grintime I might find him in, he's so busy. Wasn't sure what other "Look here at me," says Bassett. "Right in the eye. No, he looks rational. What thing are you doing? Ad-

> "Look out foreside," says Bird. We looked. A little group of Siamese in silk knickerbockers-men, this time -were standing round the car, talking, says Bird, in a speculative kind o' way, and scooching down to look underneath. I began to see a light.

We hadn't finished counting them over to him before a soft satiny Siam-"What thing?" he was yelling. "What ese chap came up and allowed politely

thing?" We were all talking at once, that Phya Somebody-which means a so loud that the manager appeared at lord-would like to speak with Mr. Bird for a moment. Sam made a This California boy, he pitched Bas- smooth reply and walked off with him sett half way into the banyan bosque. in a easy, usual sort o' way. "Hm!" says Bassett. "I wonder now

It seemed a long time before he came ng a ride round 'fore breakfast. Dawn, back, alone. He sat down and finished

fresh little lays, and laying their fresh "Well, boys," he said at last, "to be ittle eggs; and my! the sunrise honest with you, I'm disappointed. It a moment o' heat. Here's apologies." through those cocoa palms! You would hasn't turned out as I wanted. I had not believe how a nature-lover enjoys an idea o' selling this old thing to the

king as a modern improvement. Well, "Sam, old man," I says, trying to gone futt. Silly idea, I s'pose. I'm sor- best city in the world to be wealthy in Bassett and Dan Towers went right up in the air at that. The things those and we nearly had another misunder-"Now, look here, boys," said he, en- two said, I won't defile my speech with, standing. Dan Towers was glum and tirely business-like. "If any one asks "Do you mean to tell us," said Bas- wouldn't speak even. So we decided

"Not yet," said Sam, with a mis-

"Not yet!" yelled Dan and Bassett, "Now to business," says Sam to me. it and read off:

apartments windows in the second we all three went for Sam so noisy and we churned out into the road, leav- others, and cut him accidentally over story, through the liana creepers. "It's that he had to blow his horn continu- ing Bassett trying to break out the the eye. But he carried his point. shutters, and Dan trying to say what

that poor old charjot really suffered. The second officer pitched his cheroot dgin."

"That don't b'long honorable durb his majesty the king.

"I don't know about the head that She groaned and puffed and shook and out of the cabin door and meditated. "This ain't romance," says Bird, wears a crown," allows Bassett, "but cried like a baby, and even then could "Might 'a' been decent myself. \* \* This is an awful cold proposition."

We allowed it was, too, and told him what we thought of him for rousing false hopes over a lot o' mangy snake
This is an awful cold proposition."

We allowed it was, too, and told him for rousing be said yet."

What we thought of him for rousing false hopes over a lot o' mangy snake
Toom and explain, Sam Bird," he says, o' what he said. "At it for a week—
the ingencolty o' that California Bird—
the ing

and made very heavy weather of it up

smoke Sam Bird, "I told you I was disappointed the other day. I was, really, I meant to sell her to the king, but I only got a lord. That's small game; still, the pay's just as much here"-he slapped his pocket-"and there's five thousand guilders to the good, if she lasts till the Teung-Suey sails next Friday.

In our own private uproar we almost overlooked another one out by the gate. They were all yelling and standing up on the seat, and the car instead of turning went hot-foot straight across the road and rammed the embankment. Goid umbrella, pinks and pale green, whole outfit, shot over into the anal. Remember how the water looks in that little Dutch sluice? Like Bensdorp's cocoa.

"I told him he steered erratic," Sam bserves. "Anyway, it simplifies things. "Let him have the two hundred guil- I'll never know how long she would 'a' started to whistle a real catchy little ders, Dan," I says to Towers. He was lasted. Well, well. They'll never know, either. Boys, I guess we better go fish either. Boys, I guess we better go fish 'em out. It would look kind o' more thoughtful."

That night at the demonstration in our veranda there were the 5,000 guilders on Sam's table still in Javasche "Well, Sam, what-what you going

to do with it all?" says Bassett. He talked mighty meek and timid. "Dan's treasurer," says Bird. "This is the Vampire rescue fund, Basstwelve hundred and fifty apiece, go as

"Bird Banzai!" says Bassett. "You'll do. I'm sorry I said that Vampire, in "All right, my boy," says California. "How! And now what's the next move, with all our money? What's the for a while?

Some said Paris, some New York, you, remember it's mine. Matter o' sett, very pale, "that we're stuck with fact I'm hiring it by the day. But if that Old Curiosity? Have you bought my topi and draw. First city to be drawn we'd head for. Bird drew for us, and held up the

folded slip. "I kind o' hope Paris," he said. "Mind, though, we're bound, sol-Then he opened it. He looked as if he saw a ghost. Then the table. Bassett stuck his nose into

"Ashtabula, Ohio! In the compromise that followed we and looks up dreamy at the royal we began to see it in his light, and then I hopped up beside him on the seat, broke Dan Towers' long chair and two "Boys," he said, wiping away the The manager sent a Java boy out to he'd do if we came back without those blood, "I'm going home to be decent. You needn't see me further'n New

quite disgusted. "You never see things it must have laid some uneasy for the hardly move out of her own odor. Sam More you go about, the less you settle as they are. Bass—always bookish. last half hour. You come down to my was shouting, but I only got snatches down. Humphy! \* \* But think o'

"'Cept fifteen guilders Dan

properly attiawed and did not behave natives and kosong ponies right and fool, Dan Towers, 'any white man that's got stranded, specially in the



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